

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 4

DIGEST OF INTRODUCED RESOLUTION

A SENATE RESOLUTION urging the government of Turkey to cease its discrimination against the Ecumenical Patriarchate, to grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastical succession, and the right to train clergy of all nationalities, and to respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Randolph

January 4, 2012, read first time and referred to Committee on Rules and Legislative Procedure.

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SENATE RESOLUTION No. 4

MADAM PRESIDENT:

I offer the following resolution and move its adoption:

A SENATE RESOLUTION urging the government of Turkey to cease its discrimination against the Ecumenical Patriarchate, to grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international recognition, ecclesiastical succession, and the right to train clergy of all nationalities, and to respect the property rights and human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Whereas, The Ecumenical Patriarchate, located in Istanbul, Turkey, is the sacred See that presides in a spirit of brotherhood over a communion of the self-governing churches of the Orthodox Christian world;

Whereas, The See is led by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who is 270th in direct succession to St. Andrew the Apostle and holds titular primacy as primus inter pares, meaning "first among equals," in the community of Orthodox churches worldwide;

Whereas, In 1994, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, along with leaders of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, cosponsored the Conference on Peace and Tolerance, bringing together Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious leaders for an interfaith dialogue to help end the Balkan conflict and the ethnic conflict in the Caucasus region;

Whereas, In 1997, the Congress of the United States awarded Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew a Congressional Gold Medal;



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Whereas, Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on our nation, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew gathered a group of international religious leaders to produce the first joint statement with Muslim leaders condemning the attacks as "anti-religious";

Whereas, In November 2005, the Ecumenical Patriarch, along with Christian, Jewish, and Muslim leaders, cosponsored the Conference on Peace and Tolerance II to further promote peace and stability in southeastern Europe, the Caucasus region, and Central Asia via religious leaders' interfaith dialogue, understanding, and action;

Whereas, The Orthodox Christian Church, in existence for nearly 2,000 years, numbers approximately 300 million members worldwide, with more than 2 million members in the United States;

Whereas, Since 1453, the continuing presence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey has been a living testament to the religious coexistence of Christians and Muslims;

Whereas, This religious coexistence is in jeopardy because the government of Turkey refuses to recognize the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which is considered a minority religion by the Turkish government;

Whereas, The Turkish government has limited eligibility to hold the office of Ecumenical Patriarch to only Turkish nationals;

Whereas, From the millions of Orthodox Christians living in Turkey at the turn of the 20th century, there are fewer than 3,000 of the Ecumenical Patriarch's flock in Turkey today, due to the continued policies of minority discrimination during this period by the Turkish government;

Whereas, The Turkish government has reneged on its agreement to reopen the Theological School on the island of Halki, closed by the government in 1971, impeding training

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for Orthodox Christian clergy;

Whereas, The Turkish government has confiscated nearly 94 percent of the properties of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and has placed a 42 percent tax, retroactive to 1999, on the Hospital of Baloukli and Home for the Elderly, a charity hospital run by the Ecumenical Patriarchate;

Whereas, The European Union, a group of nations with a common goal of promoting peace and the well-being of its people, began accession negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 2005;

Whereas, The European Union defined membership criteria for accession at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, obligating candidate countries to achieve certain levels of reform, including stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, adherence to the rule of law, and respect for and protection of minorities and human rights;

Whereas, The Turkish government's current treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is inconsistent with the membership conditions and goals of the European Union;

Whereas, Orthodox Christians in Indiana and throughout the United States stand to lose their spiritual leader due to the continued actions of the Turkish government; and

Whereas, In November 2006, the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the order of St. Andrew the Apostle, a group of laymen, each of whom has been honored with a Patriarchal title, or "offikion," by the Ecumenical Patriarch for their outstanding service to the Orthodox Church, sent an American delegation to Turkey to meet with Turkish government officials and the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey regarding the Turkish government's treatment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate: Therefore,

*Be it resolved by the Senate of the
General Assembly of the State of Indiana:*



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1 SECTION 1. That the Indiana Senate urges the Turkish
2 government to uphold and safeguard religious and human rights
3 without compromise, cease its discrimination against the Ecumenical
4 Patriarchate, grant the Ecumenical Patriarch appropriate international
5 recognition, ecclesiastic succession, and the right to train clergy of all
6 nationalities, and respect the property rights and human rights of the
7 Ecumenical Patriarchate.

8 SECTION 2. That copies of this resolution be transmitted by the
9 Secretary of the Senate to the President of the United States, the United
10 States Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey, and the Ambassador of
11 the Republic of Turkey to the United States.

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